

TIMOTHY EVEREST ON THE ROUTE TO A CLASSIC BESPOKE SUIT



BEFORE YOU DECIDE

"The very first thing to do is to go and audition a couple of tailors. Pick two or three and go along. Have a chat, ask what kind of thing they do, ask to have a look at some of their work. Now is a great time as there are a lot of people offering a bespoke service. Having a relationship with your tailor is a very important aspect of buying a bespoke suit."



FIRST MEETING

"Once you have decided on your tailor, you should make an appointment and go along with some ideas about what you want. It's good to tell your tailors (you will usually meet with a salesman and/or cutter) as much about yourself and your lifestyle as possible as this can affect your decisions. Your tailors will help you select a fabric and talk you through styles."



FIRST FITTING

"Between three and six weeks after your first measurements, you will be asked back to your tailors for a fitting. By this time, your chosen fabric will have been ordered and patterns to your measurements made up and prepared for this, your first fitting. The garment (now at first baste stage) is tried on. The suit will be pinned and marked up."



SECOND FITTING

"You will be contacted to make an appointment in another three to six weeks. During the intervening period, your suit will literally be taken apart, laid flat and the pattern adjusted according to your fitting. The components are then remade. Your suit is now at what is known as the forward-baste stage."



THE FINISHED SUIT

"Once the garment has been remarked and your pattern readjusted, you will go back to the tailor, where you will try on your final suit again and final aesthetic alterations will be made – these are usually very quick to do. Shortly after this, your tailors will contact you to let you know that your suit is finished. You settle up and the suit is yours."



THE FUTURE

"Because there is no fusing or gluing involved with bespoke, your suit should mould to your body shape as time goes by – bespoke suits simply get better with age." ▶

Timothy Everest, 32 Elder Street, London E1, 020-7377 5770, www.timothyeverest.co.uk; Timothy Everest also opens at 13 Savile Row later this month.



Swatch and learn: Gieves & Hawkes' patchwork patterns

GIEVES & HAWKES' JOE CASELY-HAYFORD ON PREPARING TO BUY A HANDMADE SUIT

Before your first appointment, think about the following:

What is the suit for?

Are you buying it for an occasion?

What shape suits you?

What colour?

What cut?

How do you want it to look?

What's your budget?

You mustn't be embarrassed to ask your tailor any of these questions. Bespoke is a very personal experience and establishing a relationship with your tailor from the outset is very important. The more questions you ask, the more you know, and the stronger your relationship.

Don't be afraid to ask for advice on your body shape. You should look to enhance your positive attributes and hide bad points.

Common questions asked are:

"What style is trendy?", "What colour?" or "How many buttons should I have?" If it's your first suit, a good starting point is to consider a timeless one- or two-button, single-breasted design with flat-fronted trousers. Don't be trend-led, go for something classic. If you want a versatile suit, good for a variety of uses, consider a dark, block colour. Joe Casely-Hayford is creative director of Gieves & Hawkes, 1 Savile Row, London W1, 020-7434 2001, www.gievesandhawkes.com

NEWSFLASH SAVING THE STREET

For the first time in Savile Row's history, its main players are finally talking. The future of the street was under threat by rising rents and chain stores trying to sweep the tailors out of the Row. To counter this, Westminster Council and a new umbrella body called Savile Row Bespoke set up the Savile Row Strategic Group to preserve the street.

Since the group first met a year ago, many tailors have been able to reaffirm their commitment to the Row because of a new consensus on reasonable rents. The new spaces for Richard James, Timothy Everest and Ozwald Boateng send the message that bespoke is still very much a going concern.